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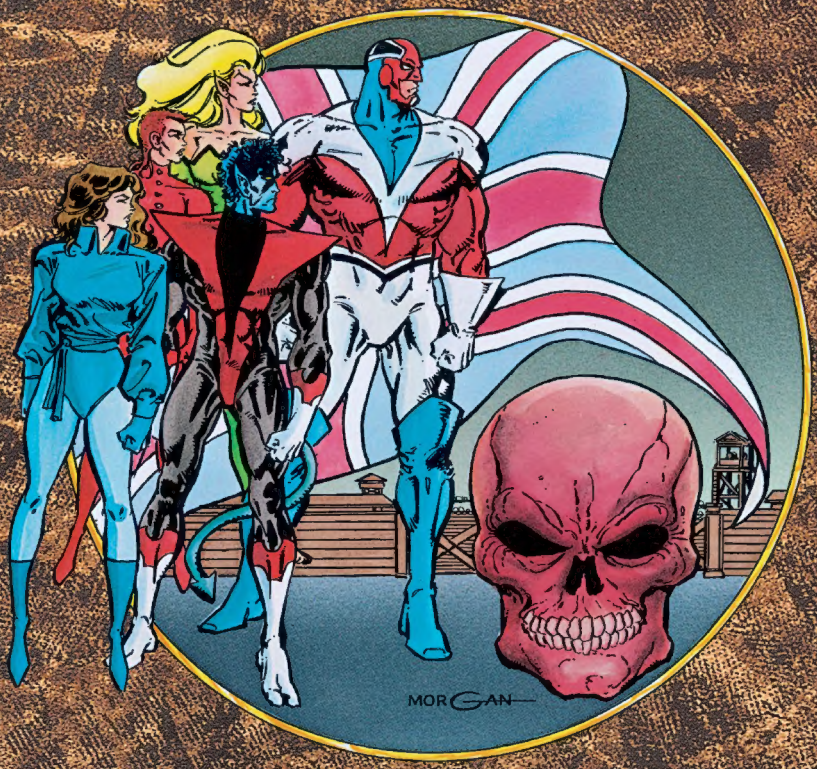
MARVEL

EXCALIBUR™



WEIRD WAR III™

EXCALIBUR: WEIRD WAR III

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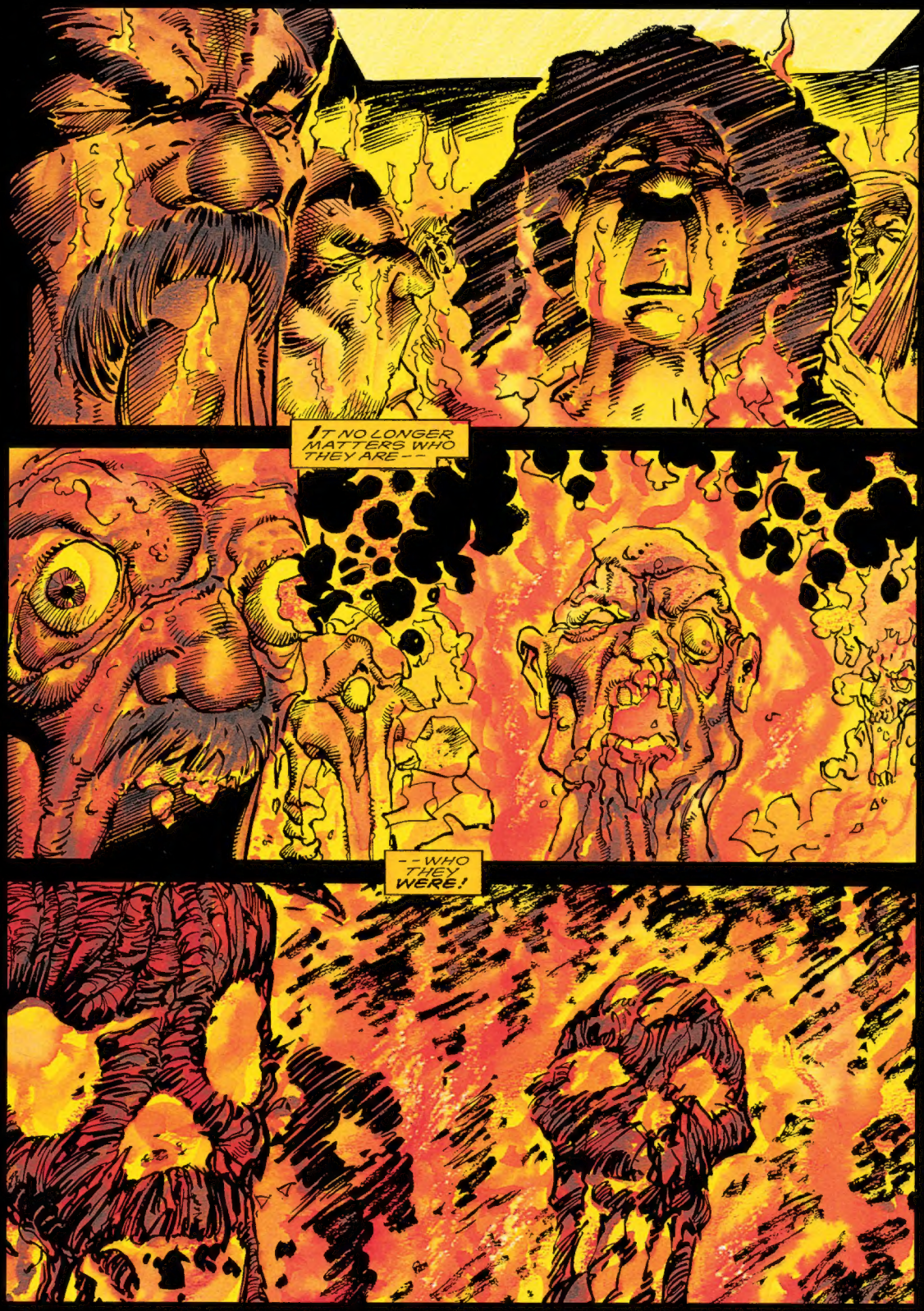
Dedicated to Seth & Debbie Kruchkow

—MICHAEL HIGGINS
1 JULY, 1990

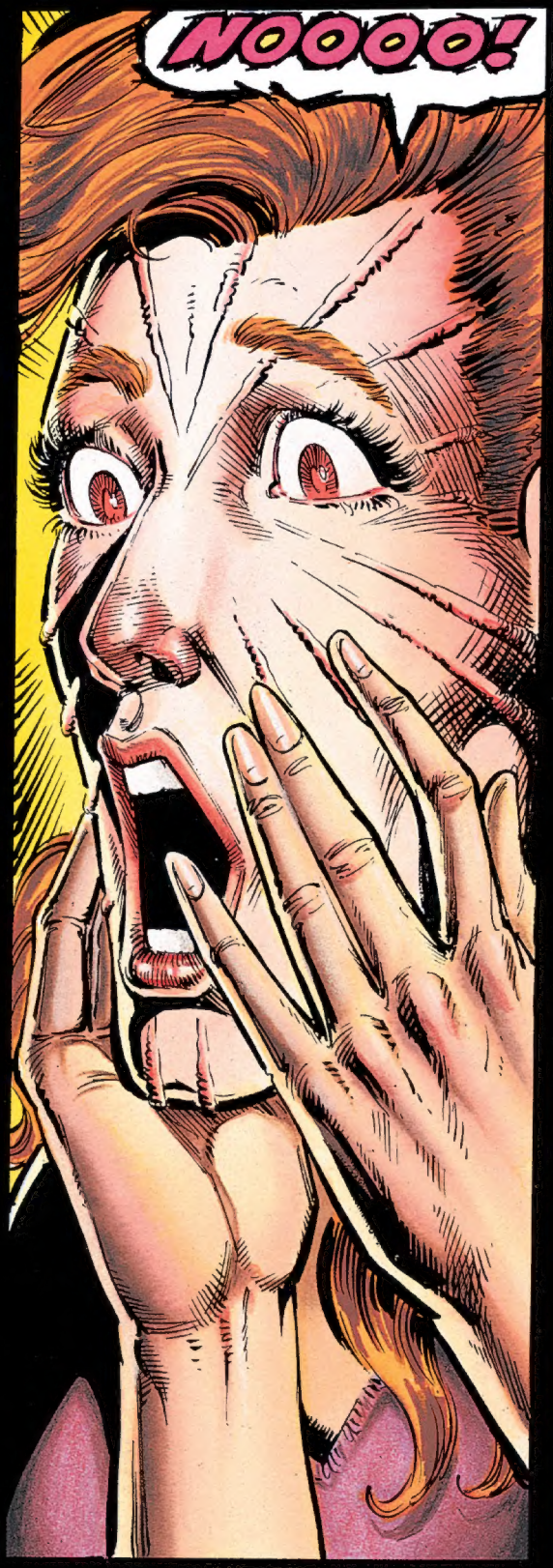
COME ON -- OFF THE TRAIN! STEP LIVELY!
LIVELY? THAT'S A JOKE!
OH, HOW DREADFUL! IT ISN'T BAD ENOUGH THAT WE'VE BEEN TAKEN FROM OUR HOMES, ROBBED OF OUR POSSESSIONS, STRIPPED OF OUR DIGNITY--
-- BUT NOW WE HAVE TO BE SUBJECTED TO THE SIGHT OF THESE WRETCHES!
IT WON'T BE LONG PRETTY THING, BEFORE YOU'RE ONE OF US!
NO TALKING, JUST STEP INTO THE CHAMBER!
CLANK
WHAT -- WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO WITH US?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

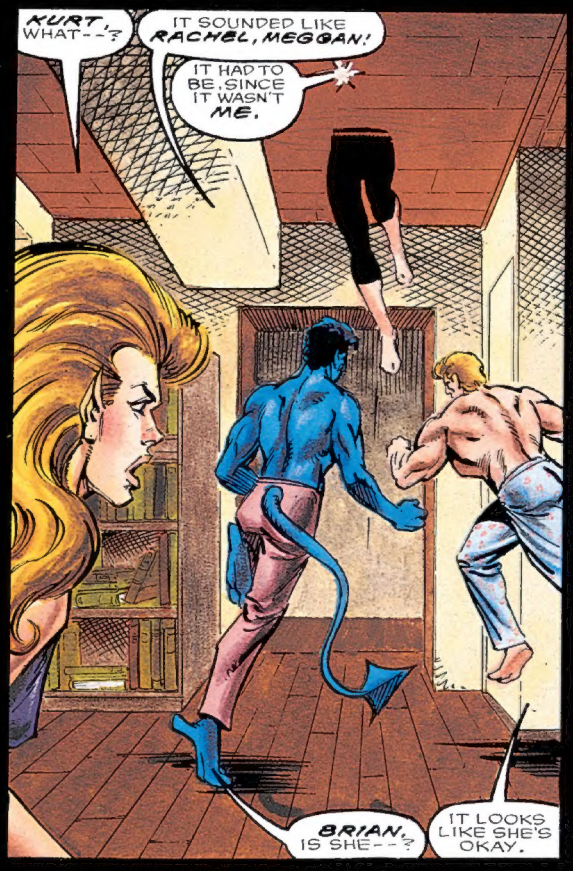

IT NO LONGER MATTERS WHO THEY ARE--
--WHO THEY WERE!

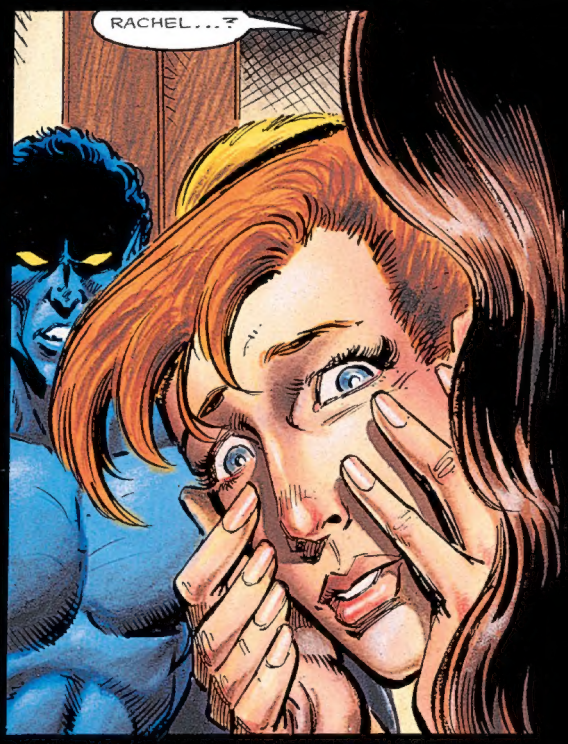
THEIR PSYCHIC ESSENCES HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DRAINED...
...FROM WHAT ONCE WAS THEIR BODIES!

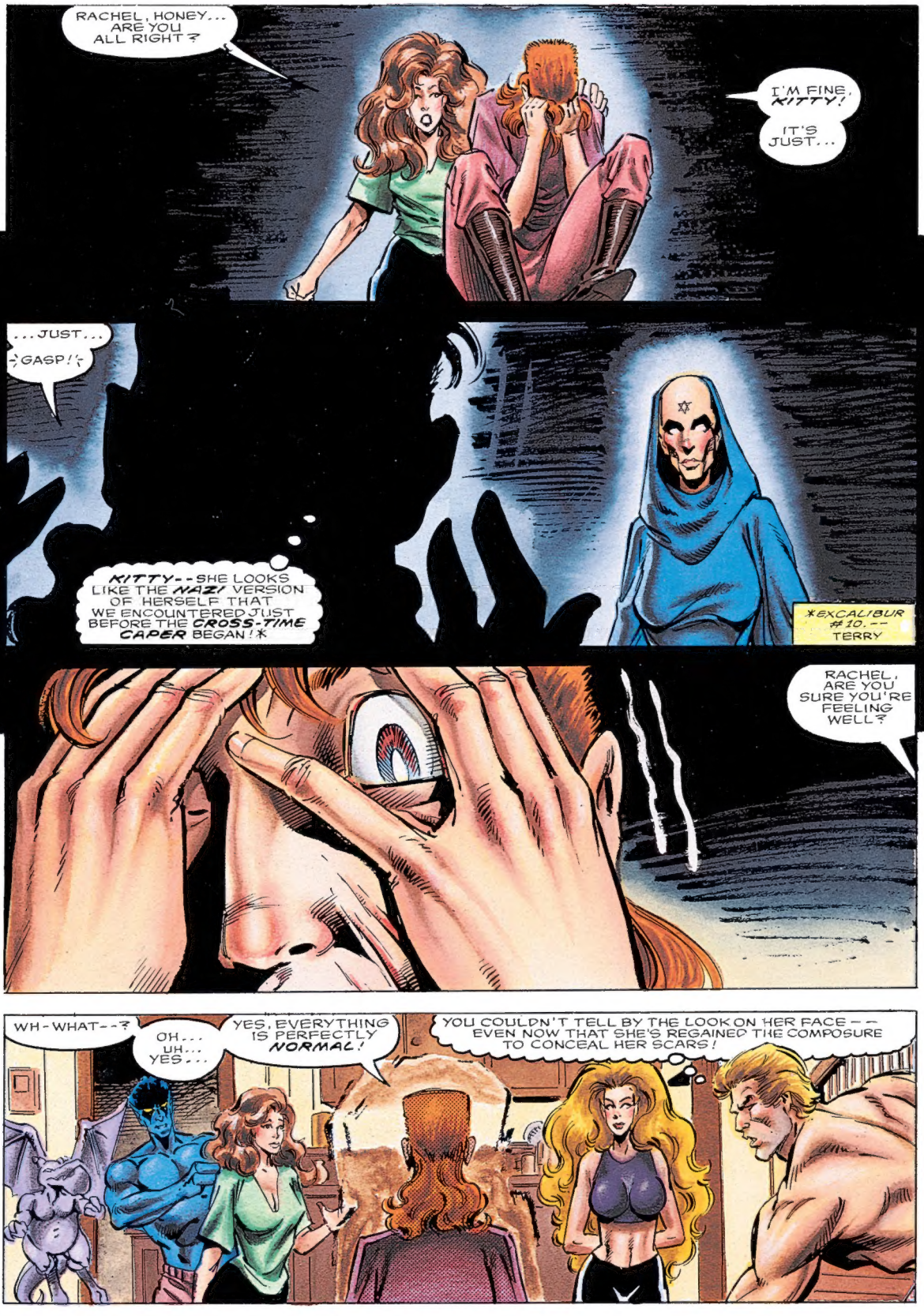
WEIRD WAR II

WOOOOOOOO!

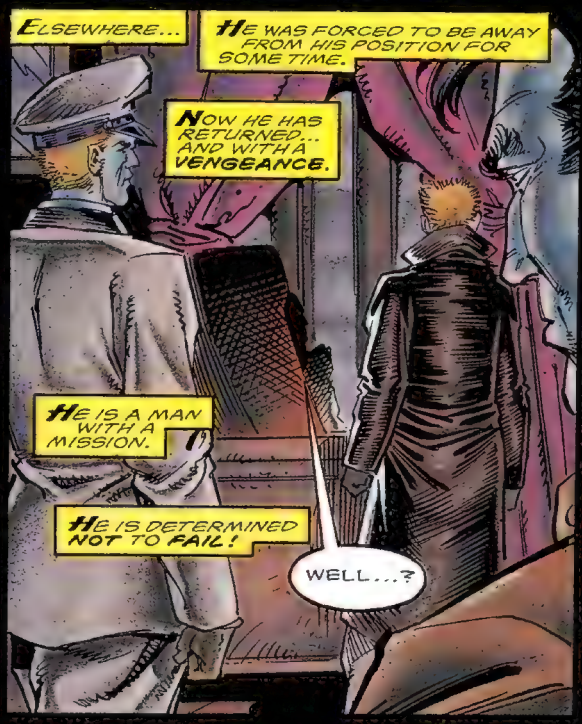

NOOOO!

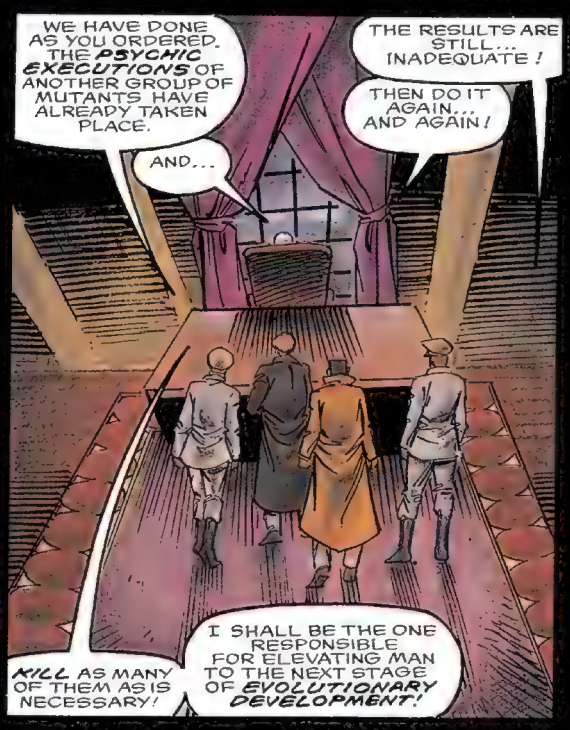

KURT, WHAT--?
IT SOUNDED LIKE RACHEL, MEGGAN!
IT HAD TO BE, SINCE IT WASN'T ME.
BRIAN, IS SHE--?
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S OKAY.


RACHEL...?


RACHEL, HONEY... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE, KITTY! IT'S JUST...
...JUST...
-GASP!-
KITTY--SHE LOOKS LIKE THE NAZI VERSION OF HERSELF THAT WE ENCOUNTERED JUST BEFORE THE CROSS-TIME CAPER BEGAN!*
*EXCALIBUR #10. -- TERRY
RACHEL, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FEELING WELL?
WH-WHAT--?
OH... UH... YES...
YES, EVERYTHING IS PERFECTLY NORMAL!
YOU COULDN'T TELL BY THE LOOK ON HER FACE -- EVEN NOW THAT SHE'S REGAINED THE COMPOSURE TO CONCEAL HER SCARS!

NOK NOK NOK
A VISITOR-- HERE?
NOT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS EVERY DAY... BUT, WHO--?
ALISTAIRE STUART!
ALISTAIRE... I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW HAPPY I AM TO--
WHERE WERE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
YOU KNOW QUITE WELL WHAT I'M REFERRING TO, NIGHTCRAWLER!
THE LEADER HAS REQUIRED ALL MUTANTS TO REGISTER-- THIS IS THE DAY HE DEMANDED FOR ALL THE MEMBERS OF EXCALIBUR TO COME FORWARD!
VERY FUNNY, ALISTAIRE!
I SEE NOTHING AMUSING ABOUT THIS SITUATION!
I VOUCHED FOR YOUR CREDIBILITY-- PUT MY OWN NECK ON THE LINE!
SLAM
YOU'D BEST MAKE GOOD ON YOUR PROMISE-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
HEIL HITLER!
HEIL HITLER?
GOD AND COUNTRY! WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?
DO YOU THINK IT POSSIBLE THAT WE DID NOT RETURN TO OUR OWN REALITY AFTER OUR CROSS-TIME CAPER?
PERHAPS WE ARE ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO SEE THE EVIDENCE!
IF ONLY IT WERE THAT SIMPLE! NO, THIS IS OUR WORLD... AND YET IT ISN'T. SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAS BEGUN!

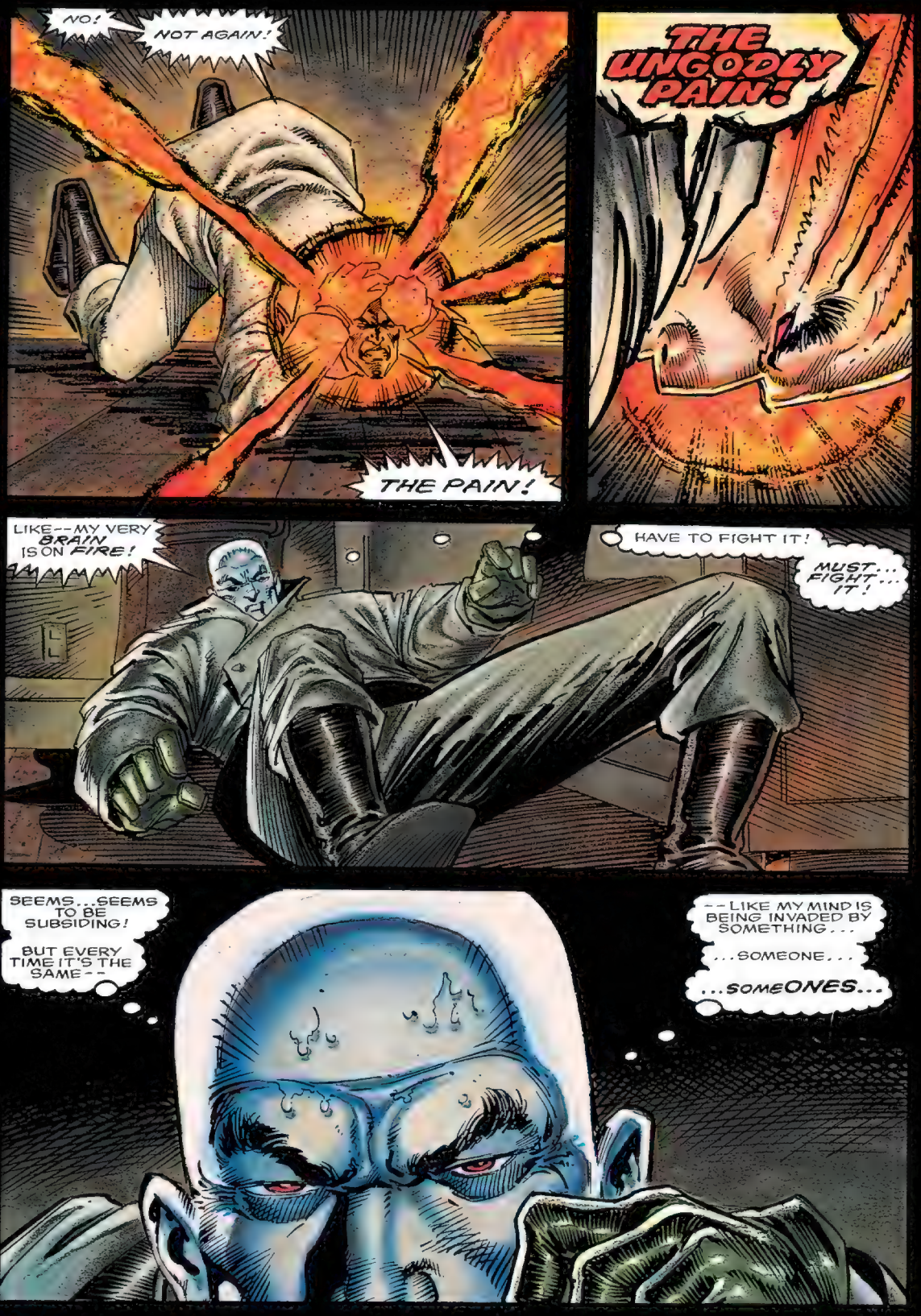

ELSEWHERE...
HE WAS FORCED TO BE AWAY FROM HIS POSITION FOR SOME TIME.
NOW HE HAS RETURNED... AND WITH A VENGEANCE.
HE IS A MAN WITH A MISSION.
HE IS DETERMINED NOT TO FAIL!
WELL...?


WE HAVE DONE AS YOU ORDERED. THE PSYCHIC EXECUTIONS OF ANOTHER GROUP OF MUTANTS HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.
AND...
KILL AS MANY OF THEM AS IS NECESSARY!
I SHALL BE THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR ELEVATING MAN TO THE NEXT STAGE OF EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT!
THE RESULTS ARE STILL... INADEQUATE!
THEN DO IT AGAIN... AND AGAIN!

I SHALL SUCCEED IN CREATING-- THE X-MAN!
YES... HERR XAVIER!

HEIL HITLER!

THE "LEADER" IS A FOOL! WHO WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN I--THE MAN HE HAS PERSONALLY GROOMED TO BE HIS SUCCESSOR?!
BUT I HAVE FAR SURPASSED THE LEVEL OF HIS FEEBLE DREAMS!
MY VISION SHALL BECOME REALITY!
ONCE I WAS PERCEIVED AS A MAN OF NOBLE INTENTIONS!
NOW I AM REVERED... SIMPLY BECAUSE THE RABBLE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE!
TO DEFY ME IS TO INVITE A SENTENCE OF DEATH!
MINE IS THE POWER!
MINE SHALL BE THE GLORY!
MINE--
AAARRRGGGGHAH!

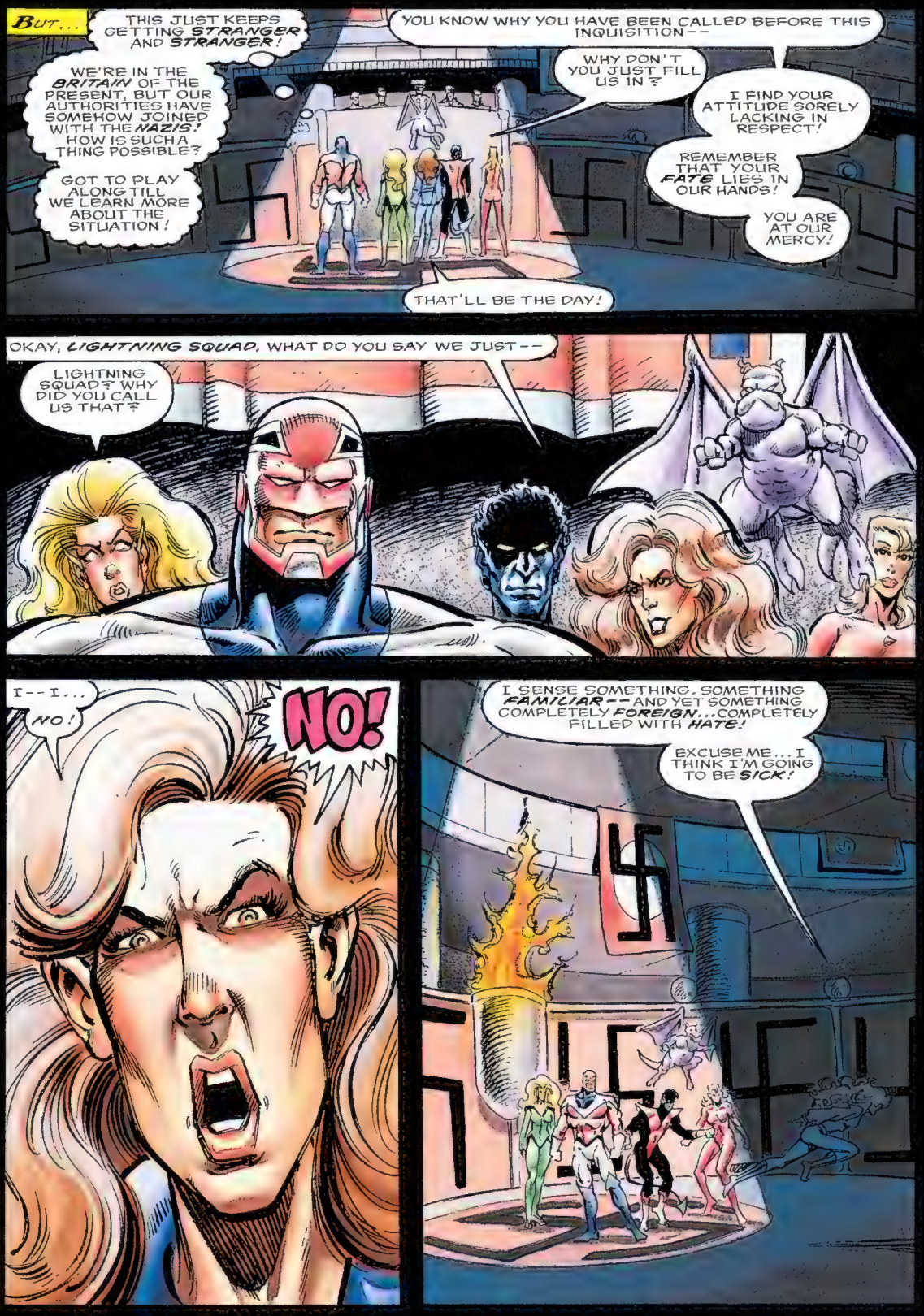

NO!
NOT AGAIN!
THE PAIN!
THE UNGODLY PAIN!
LIKE--MY VERY BRAIN IS ON FIRE!
HAVE TO FIGHT IT!
MUST... FIGHT... IT!
SEEMS...SEEMS TO BE SUBSIDING!
BUT EVERY TIME IT'S THE SAME--
--LIKE MY MIND IS BEING INVADED BY SOMETHING...
...SOMEONE...
...SOMEONES...

YET ELSEWHERE...
DO YOU REALLY THINK WE SHOULD BE DOING THIS?
I'M NO LONGER CERTAIN OF ANYTHING, CAPTAIN BRITAIN!
STILL, WHAT OTHER CHOICE HAVE WE?
GET OUT OF OUR HOMELAND!
GET OFF THE PLANET!
DEATH TO THE STINKING MUTIES!
DEATH?
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID, SHADOWCAT.
LET'S KILL THEM HERE AND NOW!
LYNCH 'EM!
STRING 'EM UP!
WE MUST PROCEED WITH EXTREME CAUTION!
YEAH, I THINK WE'VE ALL FIGURED THAT OUT, PHOENIX!

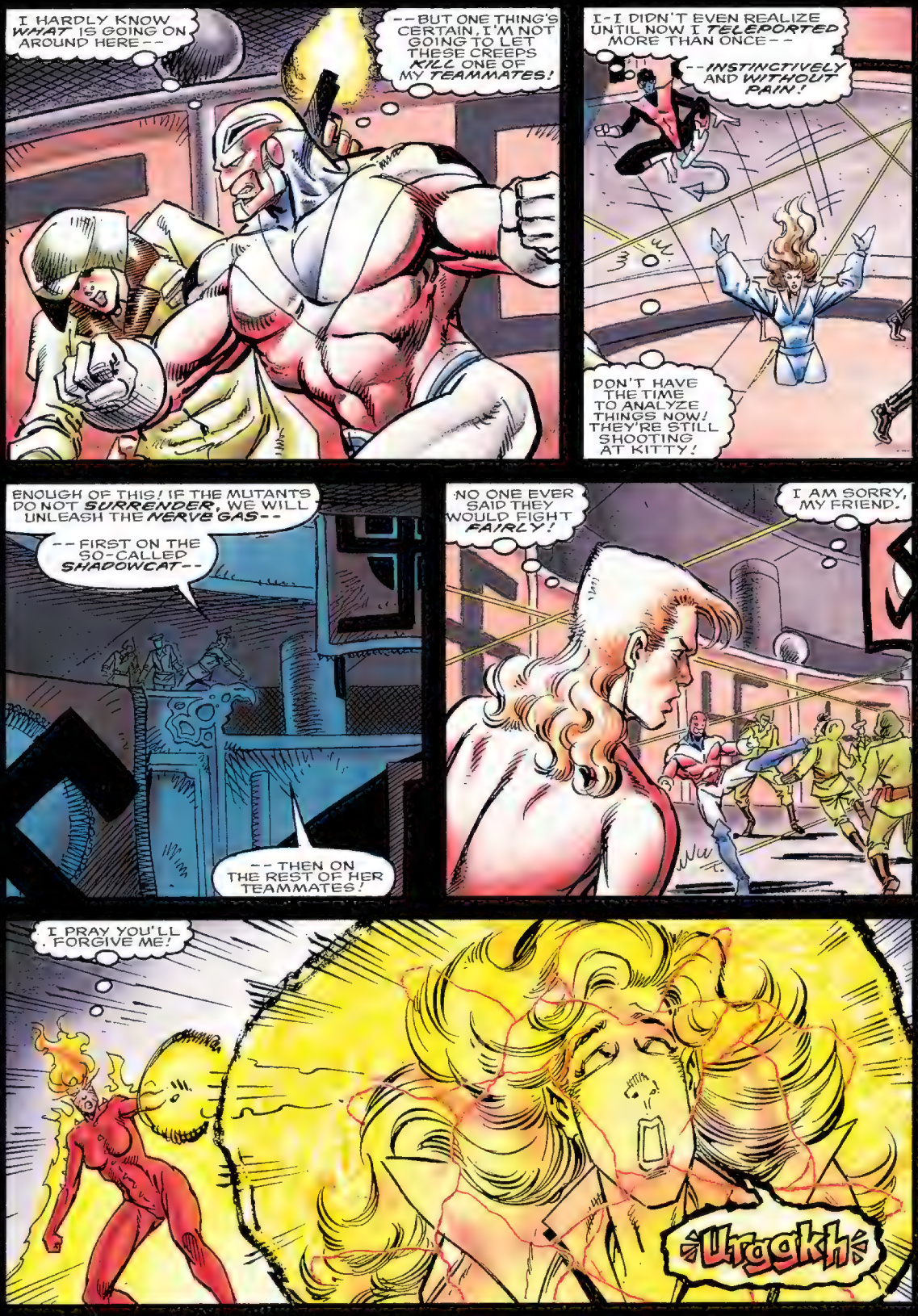
I'M SURE WE CAN GET RIGHT TO THE BOTTOM OF--
GASP
THE PRIME MINISTER--AND HER ADVISERS--SURROUNDED BY NAZIS!
SURELY THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS IN GRAVE DANGER!
THE ONLY DANGER WE PERCEIVE HERE--
--IS THE THREAT THAT YOU REPRESENT...AND THAT IS PRECISELY WHY YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED BEFORE THIS BOARD!
THAT CUTS IT!
EASY, KITTEN! REMEMBER--EXTREME CAUTION! GIVING IN TO IMPULSES CAN ONLY WORK AGAINST US!
I WILL NOT STAND FOR--
EASY, CAPTAIN! WE KNOW YOUR FEELINGS, ESPECIALLY WHERE YOUR COUNTRY IS CONCERNED, BUT WE MUST ACT WISELY AND TO OUR GREATEST ADVANTAGE!
GOT TO KEEP A TIGHT REIN ON MY SHAPE-SHIFTING ABILITIES! THERE'S NO WAY IN THE WORLD I'M EVER GOING TO BECOME SOMETHING LIKE--
--THAT!

AND...
I SUSPECTED IT WOULD COME TO THIS!
IF ONLY YOU HADN'T DOUBTED ME.
I WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN AN IMBECILE TO PUT MY COMPLETE TRUST IN YOU, JOHANN.
DESPITE YOUR LOVE OF THE FATHERLAND, HERR SCHMIDT, YOU ARE...TOO AMBITIOUS.
QUITE IRONIC, ISN'T IT, MY LEADER, WHEN WE EXAMINE THE PREDICAMENT THAT XAVIER HAS CREATED FOR US?
HE WAS... HE WAS MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE REICH. BUT HE HAS CHANGED...
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THAT THERE WERE OTHER HOPES-- OTHERS WHO SHARED YOUR DREAM.
A DREAM THAT XAVIER HAS SHATTERED. HE MUST BE STOPPED!
AND NOW YOU TURN TO--
"...THE RED SKULL!
YES.
CAN I COUNT ONCE MORE UPON YOUR LOYALTY, MY ALLY?
AS ALWAYS, MEIN FUHRER!
HEIL HITLER!
WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE WE DO, JOHANN?

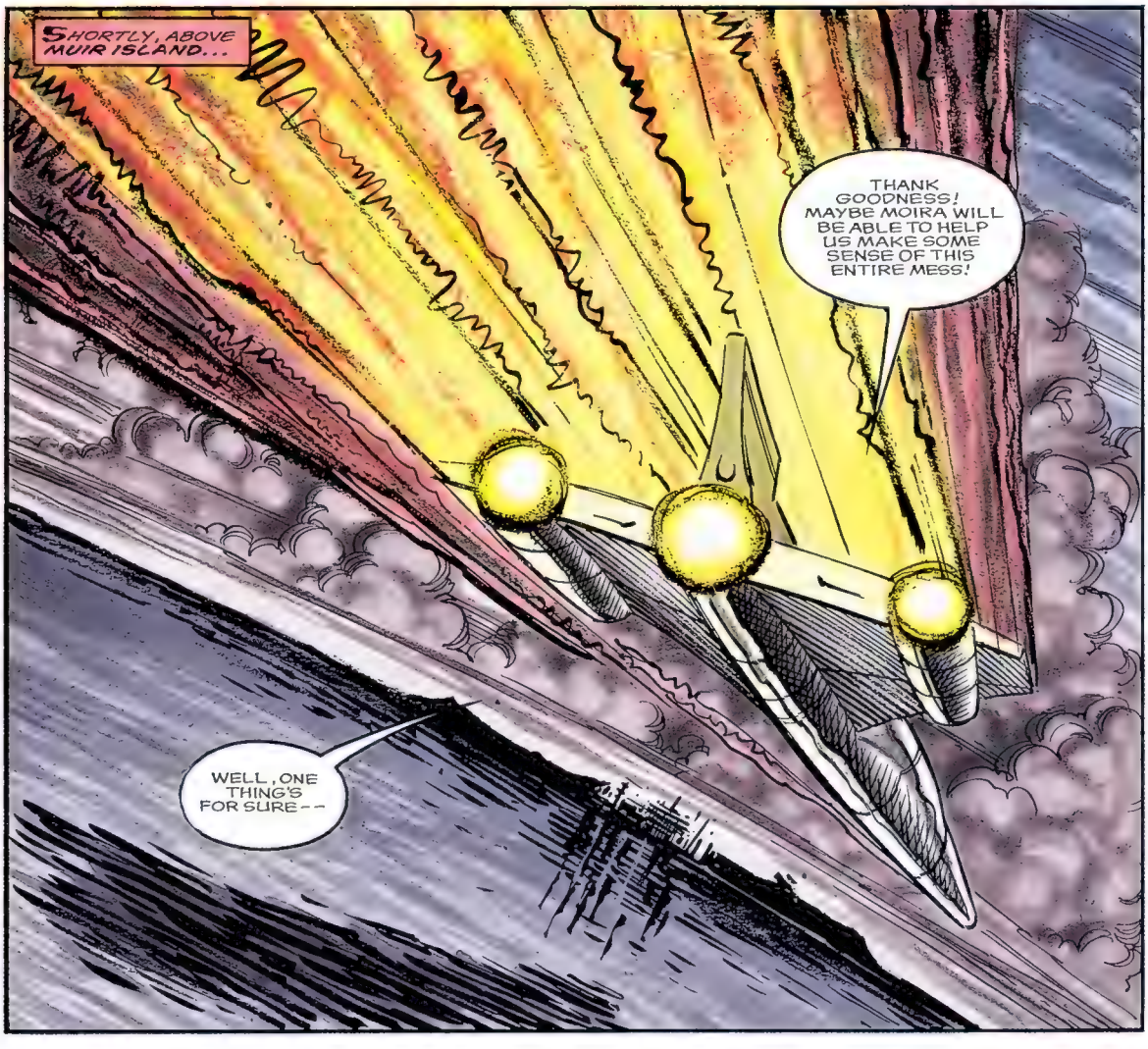
WHILE...
I MUST PLAN MY NEXT MOVES WITH GREAT CAUTION.
I HAVE COME TOO FAR TO LET ANYTHING STAND IN MY WAY!
THERE ARE THOSE OF GREAT POWER WHO ARE LOYAL TO ME--
--MUTANTS WHO I EXPERIMENTED ON EARLIER AND STILL ALLOWED TO LIVE THAT THEY MIGHT SERVE THE REICH--
--THOSE WHO WOULD DO WHATEVER I DESIRE!
I NEED THEM HERE BY MY SIDE. THE ULTIMATE CONFLICT WILL SOON UPON US!
I MUST FOCUS MY THOUGHTS--
--REACH OUT WITH MY MIND AND CONTACT--
LIGHTNING SQUAD!


BUT...
THIS JUST KEEPS GETTING STRANGER AND STRANGER!
WE'RE IN THE BRITAIN OF THE PRESENT, BUT OUR AUTHORITIES HAVE SOMEHOW JOINED WITH THE NAZIS! HOW IS SUCH A THING POSSIBLE?
GOT TO PLAY ALONG TILL WE LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SITUATION!
YOU KNOW WHY YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED BEFORE THIS INQUISITION--
WHY DON'T YOU JUST FILL US IN?
I FIND YOUR ATTITUDE SORELY LACKING IN RESPECT!
REMEMBER THAT YOUR FATE LIES IN OUR HANDS!
YOU ARE AT OUR MERCY!
THAT'LL BE THE DAY!
OKAY, LIGHTNING SQUAD, WHAT DO YOU SAY WE JUST--
LIGHTNING SQUAD? WHY DID YOU CALL US THAT?
I--I...
NO!
NO!
I SENSE SOMETHING. SOMETHING FAMILIAR--AND YET SOMETHING COMPLETELY FOREIGN...COMPLETELY FILLED WITH HATE!
EXCUSE ME... I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK!

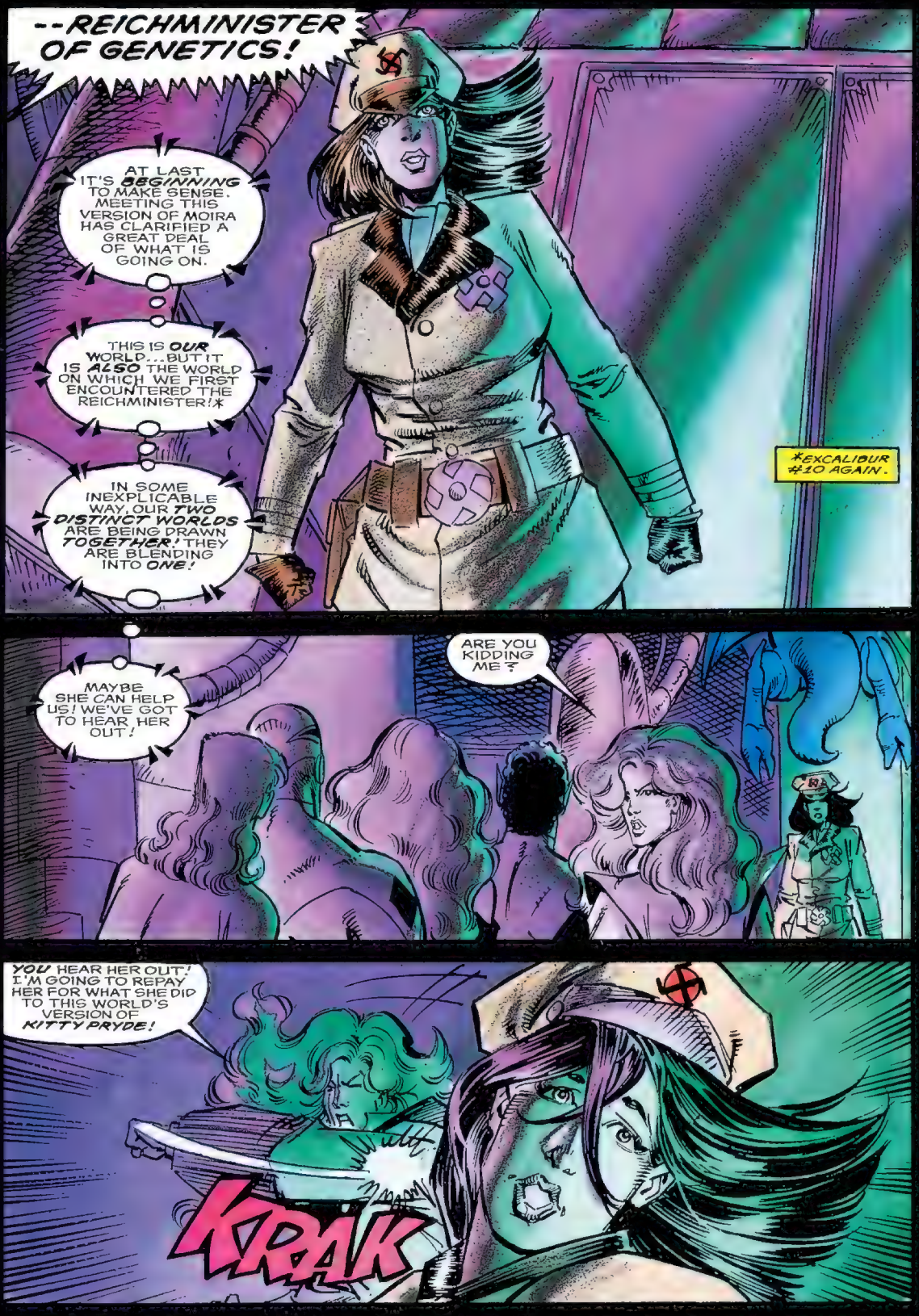
SOMETHING IS RAVISHING MY MIND--
--VIOLATING MY VERY SOUL!
OBSERVE, COUNCIL MEMBERS!
THE MUTANT DEMONSTRATES HER DEFICIENCIES--FRAILTIES!
CAN THERE BE ANY QUESTION THAT HER EXTERMINATION WOULD SERVE TO STRENGTHEN THE REICH?
YOU WILL NOT HARM MY FRIEND!
WHY, I OUGHT TO--
WHAT YOU OUGHT TO DO IS ALLOW ME TO TELEPORT YOU TO--
BAMF
--SAFETY?
PERHAPS WE'D BEST TRY THAT AGAIN!
BAMF


I HARDLY KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND HERE--
--BUT ONE THING'S CERTAIN, I'M NOT GOING TO LET THESE CREEPS KILL ONE OF MY TEAMMATES!
I-I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE UNTIL NOW I TELEPORTED MORE THAN ONCE--
--INSTINCTIVELY AND WITHOUT PAIN!
DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO ANALYZE THINGS NOW! THEY'RE STILL SHOOTING AT KITTY!
ENOUGH OF THIS! IF THE MUTANTS DO NOT SURRENDER, WE WILL UNLEASH THE NERVE GAS--
--FIRST ON THE SO-CALLED SHADOWCAT--
--THEN ON THE REST OF HER TEAMMATES!
NO ONE EVER SAID THEY WOULD FIGHT FAIRLY!
I AM SORRY, MY FRIEND.
I PRAY YOU'LL FORGIVE ME!
Urgokh

ENOUGH!
WERE THE AUTHORITY MINE, I WOULD SEE ALL OF YOU SLAIN IMMEDIATELY!
LET US HOPE THAT WILL STILL BE YOUR INEVITABLE DESTINY!
YOU ARE ORDERED TO REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO MOIRA MacTAGGERT!


SHORTLY, ABOVE MUIR ISLAND...
THANK GOODNESS! MAYBE MOIRA WILL BE ABLE TO HELP US MAKE SOME SENSE OF THIS ENTIRE MESS!
WELL, ONE THING'S FOR SURE--

-- SHE CAN'T MAKE MATTERS ANY WORSE!
WELCOME, EXCALIBUR! I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!
GASP! YOU?!
HERR DOKTOR MacTAGGERT--


--REICHMINISTER OF GENETICS!
AT LAST IT'S BEGINNING TO MAKE SENSE. MEETING THIS VERSION OF MOIRA HAS CLARIFIED A GREAT DEAL OF WHAT IS GOING ON.
THIS IS OUR WORLD...BUT IT IS ALSO THE WORLD ON WHICH WE FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE REICHMINISTER!*
IN SOME INEXPLICABLE WAY, OUR TWO DISTINCT WORLDS ARE BEING DRAWN TOGETHER! THEY ARE BLENDING INTO ONE!
*EXCALIBUR #10 AGAIN.
MAYBE SHE CAN HELP US! WE'VE GOT TO HEAR HER OUT!
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
YOU HEAR HER OUT! I'M GOING TO REPAY HER FOR WHAT SHE DID TO THIS WORLD'S VERSION OF KITTY PRYDE!
KRAK

IF THAT IS THE CASE, IMPULSIVE ONE, FIRST YOU WILL BE FORCED TO BATTLE--

--THE REICHSMEN!

HOLY--.

IEEE-EEE-EE-EE-EEE
AAARRGGggghh
YOU PICKED THE WRONG TIME TO HESITATE, YOUNG ONE!
YOU HAVE FALLEN BEFORE THE MIND-PIERCING SONIC SCREAM OF THE BANSHEE!
AND YOU SHALL FARE NO BETTER AGAINST THE POWERS OF HAVOK!
HE'S ALMOST RIGHT!
EVEN MY INHERENT ABILITIES WOULDN'T BE STRONG ENOUGH TO STAND AGAINST HIS COSMIC BLASTS WITHOUT THE MYSTIC ENHANCEMENTS PROVIDED BY MY COSTUME!
SORRY, DARLIN', BUT YOU WON'T BE HITTING ROGUE LIKE THAT!
NO? THEN PERHAPS THIS WILL DO!
ZZ
ZPPPT

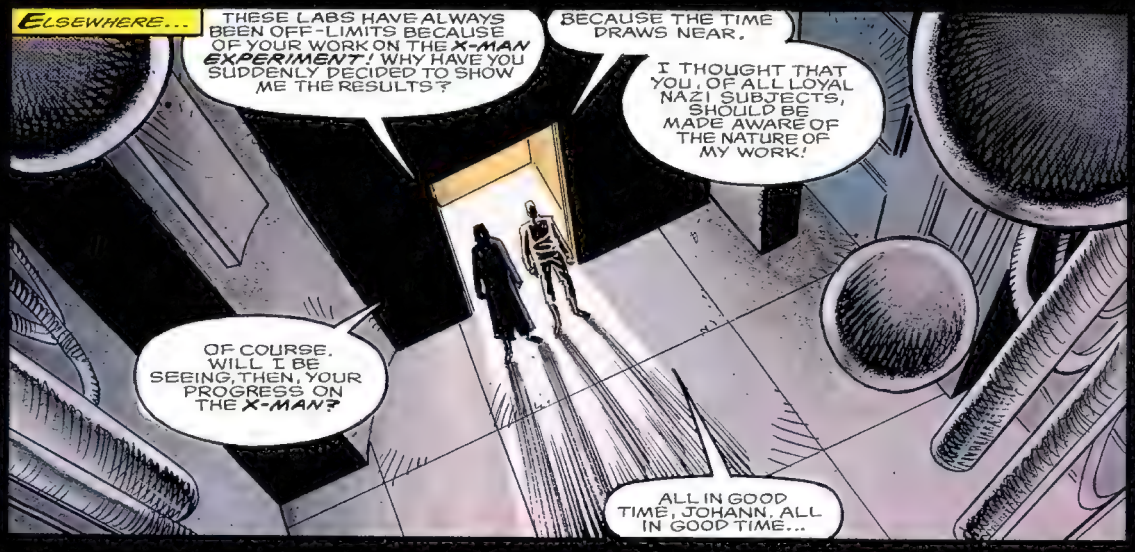
MEGGAN SO RARELY UTILIZES HER MORE FORCEFUL ABILITIES. I WONDER WHY...
SHE MAY NEVER HAVE USED THEM ON SOMEONE WITH POWERS LIKE ROGUE.
MEGGAN HAS TEMPORARILY LOST HER POWERS TO ROGUE-- BUT ROGUE IS COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL, UNABLE TO MANIPULATE MEGGAN'S SHAPE-SHIFTING ABILITY!
NOW IT'S MY TURN!
DON'T WORRY, MEIN FREUND--
--THE CAT DOES NOT HAVE YOUR TONGUE!
I AM MERELY TAKING YOU--
--FOR A LITTLE RIDE--
BAMF
--AFTER A FASHION.
BAMF
BAMF
IT'S JUST A PITY THAT MULTIPLE TELEPORTATION--
--IS A STRAIN ONLY Z CAN ENDURE!
HAVOK'S EXPENDED A GREAT DEAL OF ENERGY-- I HAVEN'T HAD TO DO ANYTHING YET...
...EXCEPT STAND HERE AND LET HIM WEAR HIMSELF OUT!
BUT NOW--
KLOK
--THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE!

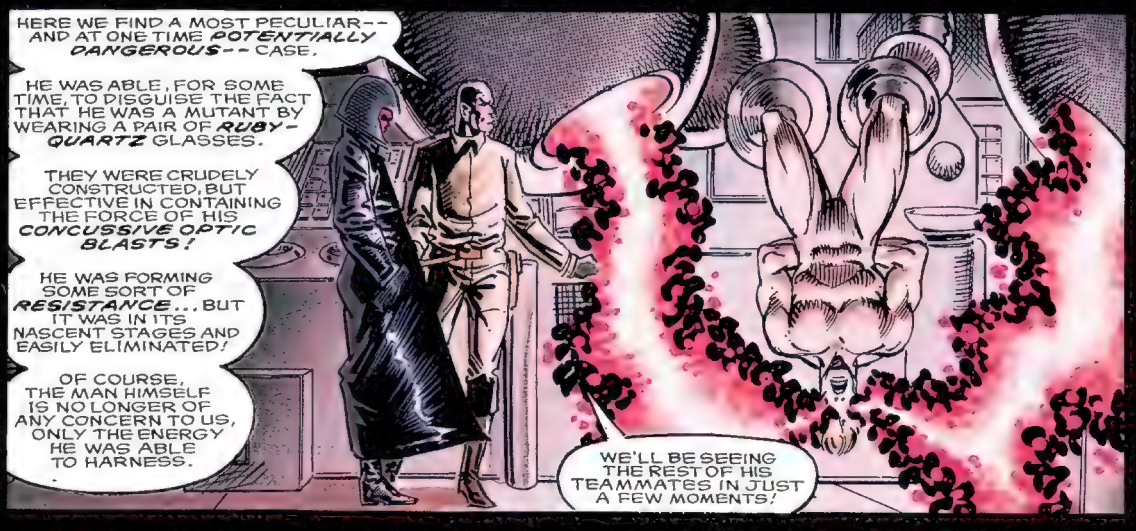
BANSHEE'S SCREAM DIDN'T KEEP ME OUT FOR LONG--BUT I ALMOST WISH IT DID! I CAN HARDLY BRING MYSELF TO BATTLE THE ELEMENTAL POWER OF STORM--
--EVEN IF SHE ISN'T THE SAME ORORO THAT I CAME TO CALL MY FRIEND.
IN SOME WAYS THIS IS EVEN HARDER--
IT DOESN'T HELP ANY WHEN I SEE THAT SHE, TOO, IS A VICTIM OF THE HORRORS PERPETRATED BY THE POWERS THAT RULE HER WORLD!
--ESPECIALLY WHEN THE PERSON I KNEW AND LOVED IS DEAD!*
*OR SO SHADOWCAT--AND THE REST OF OUR WORLD--BELIEVES.
STILL, IF IT'S GOING TO BE ME OR HER--
YOO-HOO!
TAP
TAP
TAP
--IT'S GOING TO BE HER!
KBAM

CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE THIS FEELING-- SOMETHING TEARING AT MY BRAIN!
REACHED OUT WITH THE PSI-POWERS OF MY MIND--ONLY TO ENCOUNTER AN ENTITY OF UNFATHOMABLE ENERGIES! WHO--WHAT--CAN IT BE?
IN A WORD--
--PHOENIX!
AND NOW, PSYLOCKE, IT IS TIME YOU LEARNED THE TRUE MEANING OF POWER!
ARRGGRRGGGH!
HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING MYSELF THAT THIS PSYLOCKE IS NOT MY SISTER, BETSY BRADDOCK--NO MATTER HOW STRONG THE SIMILARITY!
BUT, ACCORDING TO PHOENIX, OUR WORLD HAS COMBINED WITH THEIRS!

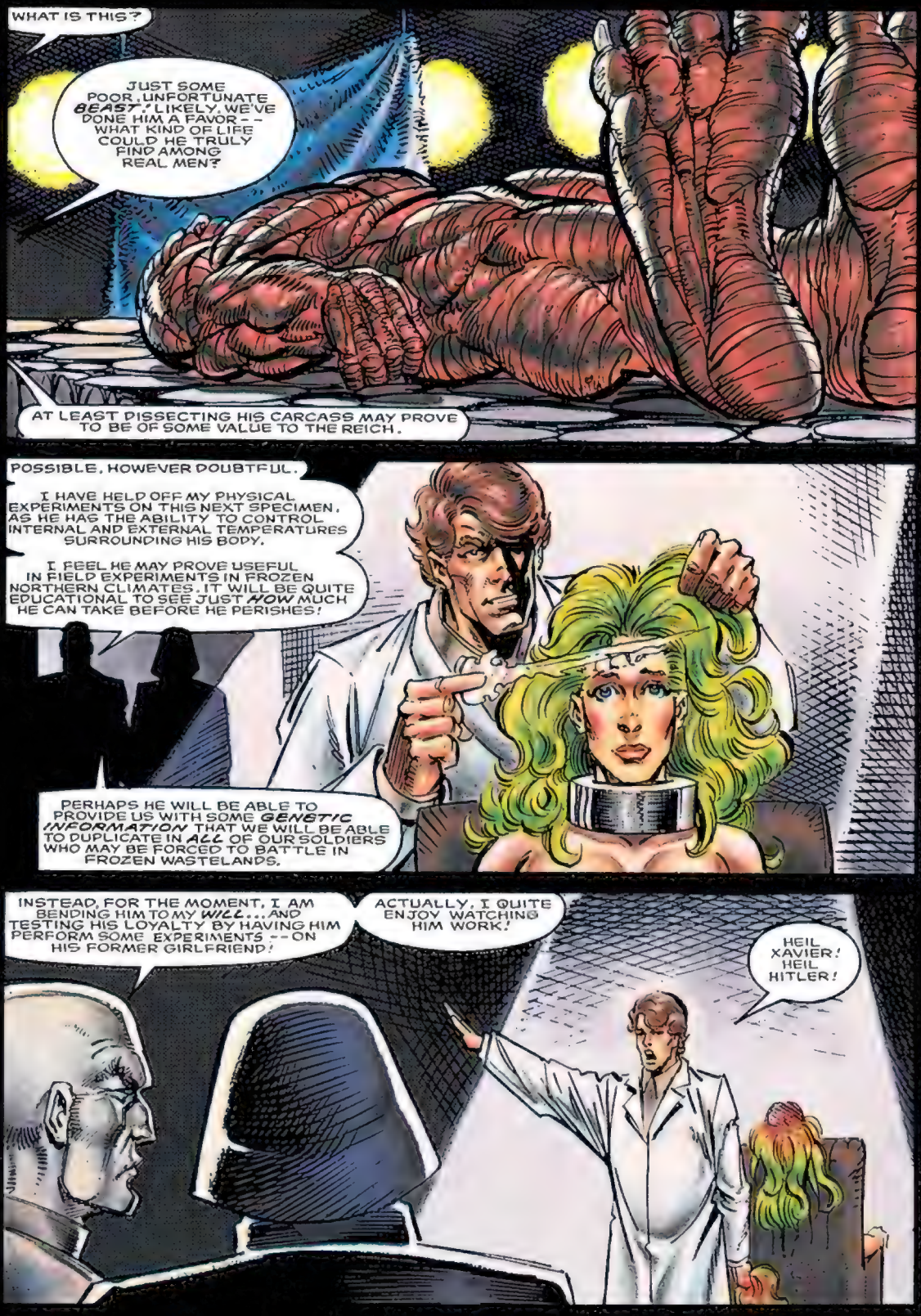
ENOUGH!
ENOUGH OF THIS MADNESS!
I SAID ENOUGH, REICHSMEN. I WISH FOR YOUR AGGRESSIONS TO CEASE, AS WELL AS THOSE OF YOUR FORMIDABLE OPPONENTS!
NOW ABANDON THIS BATTLE! I WILL DEAL WITH YOU LATER!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS, KITTY!
KITTY?! HOW DO YOU--?

I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE CONFUSED--AND WELL YOU MIGHT BE...
...BUT IT IS NOT ENTIRELY TRUE THAT I AM LADY MOIRA MacTAGGERT!
AS WORLDS COLLIDED, EACH OF US EXPERIENCED SOMETHING OF A RE-BIRTH-- PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL TRAITS COMBINING IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT DNA WOULD IN ORDER TO DETERMINE DOMINANT AND RECESSIVE TRAITS AT BIRTH.
THOUGH, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES I APPEAR TO BE THE REICHSMINISTER, IT IS THE MIND OF THE MOIRA THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THAT IS DOMINANT WITHIN THIS BODY!
TRUST ME. I AM GOING TO HELP YOU!
QUICKLY-- PUT THESE ON!


ELSEWHERE...
THESE LABS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OFF-LIMITS BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK ON THE X-MAN EXPERIMENT! WHY HAVE YOU SUDDENLY DECIDED TO SHOW ME THE RESULTS?
BECAUSE THE TIME DRAWS NEAR.
I THOUGHT THAT YOU, OF ALL LOYAL NAZI SUBJECTS, SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THE NATURE OF MY WORK!
OF COURSE. WILL I BE SEEING, THEN, YOUR PROGRESS ON THE X-MAN?
ALL IN GOOD TIME, JOHANN. ALL IN GOOD TIME...


HERE WE FIND A MOST PECULIAR-- AND AT ONE TIME POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS-- CASE.
HE WAS ABLE, FOR SOME TIME, TO DISGUISE THE FACT THAT HE WAS A MUTANT BY WEARING A PAIR OF RUBY-QUARTZ GLASSES.
THEY WERE CRUDELY CONSTRUCTED, BUT EFFECTIVE IN CONTAINING THE FORCE OF HIS CONCUSSIVE OPTIC BLASTS!
HE WAS FORMING SOME SORT OF RESISTANCE... BUT IT WAS IN ITS NASCENT STAGES AND EASILY ELIMINATED!
OF COURSE, THE MAN HIMSELF IS NO LONGER OF ANY CONCERN TO US, ONLY THE ENERGY HE WAS ABLE TO HARNESS.
WE'LL BE SEEING THE REST OF HIS TEAMMATES IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS!

HERE'S ONE. SOMEHOW, THE UNFORTUNATE CREATURE ACTUALLY GREW A PAIR OF WINGS.
WE DIDN'T BELIEVE IT AT FIRST-- THOUGHT IT MUST HAVE BEEN SCIENTIFICALLY ACHIEVED!
AS YOU CAN SEE, WE WERE WRONG!
UNFORTUNATELY, HIS REMAINS PROVIDE US WITH LITTLE THAT WE COULD NOT ASCERTAIN BY EXPLORING THE FUNCTIONS OF A BIRD.
AT BEST, THIS... THIS THING... WOULD HAVE SERVED AS A FREAK SHOW ATTRACTION!
HIS VALUE WAS SADLY OVERESTIMATED!


WHAT IS THIS?
JUST SOME POOR, UNFORTUNATE *BEAST*! LIKELY, WE'VE DONE HIM A FAVOR -- WHAT KIND OF LIFE COULD HE TRULY FIND AMONG REAL MEN?
AT LEAST DISSECTING HIS CARCASS MAY PROVE TO BE OF SOME VALUE TO THE REICH.
POSSIBLE, HOWEVER DOUBTFUL.
I HAVE HELD OFF MY PHYSICAL EXPERIMENTS ON THIS NEXT SPECIMEN, AS HE HAS THE ABILITY TO CONTROL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TEMPERATURES SURROUNDING HIS BODY.
I FEEL HE MAY PROVE USEFUL IN FIELD EXPERIMENTS IN FROZEN NORTHERN CLIMATES. IT WILL BE QUITE EDUCATIONAL TO SEE JUST *HOW* MUCH HE CAN TAKE BEFORE HE PERISHES!
PERHAPS HE WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE US WITH SOME *GENETIC INFORMATION* THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO DUPLICATE IN *ALL* OF OUR SOLDIERS WHO MAY BE FORCED TO BATTLE IN FROZEN WASTELANDS.
INSTEAD, FOR THE MOMENT, I AM BENDING HIM TO MY *WILL*... AND TESTING HIS LOYALTY BY HAVING HIM PERFORM SOME EXPERIMENTS -- ON HIS FORMER GIRLFRIEND!
ACTUALLY, I QUITE ENJOY WATCHING HIM WORK!
HEIL XAVIER! HEIL HITLER!

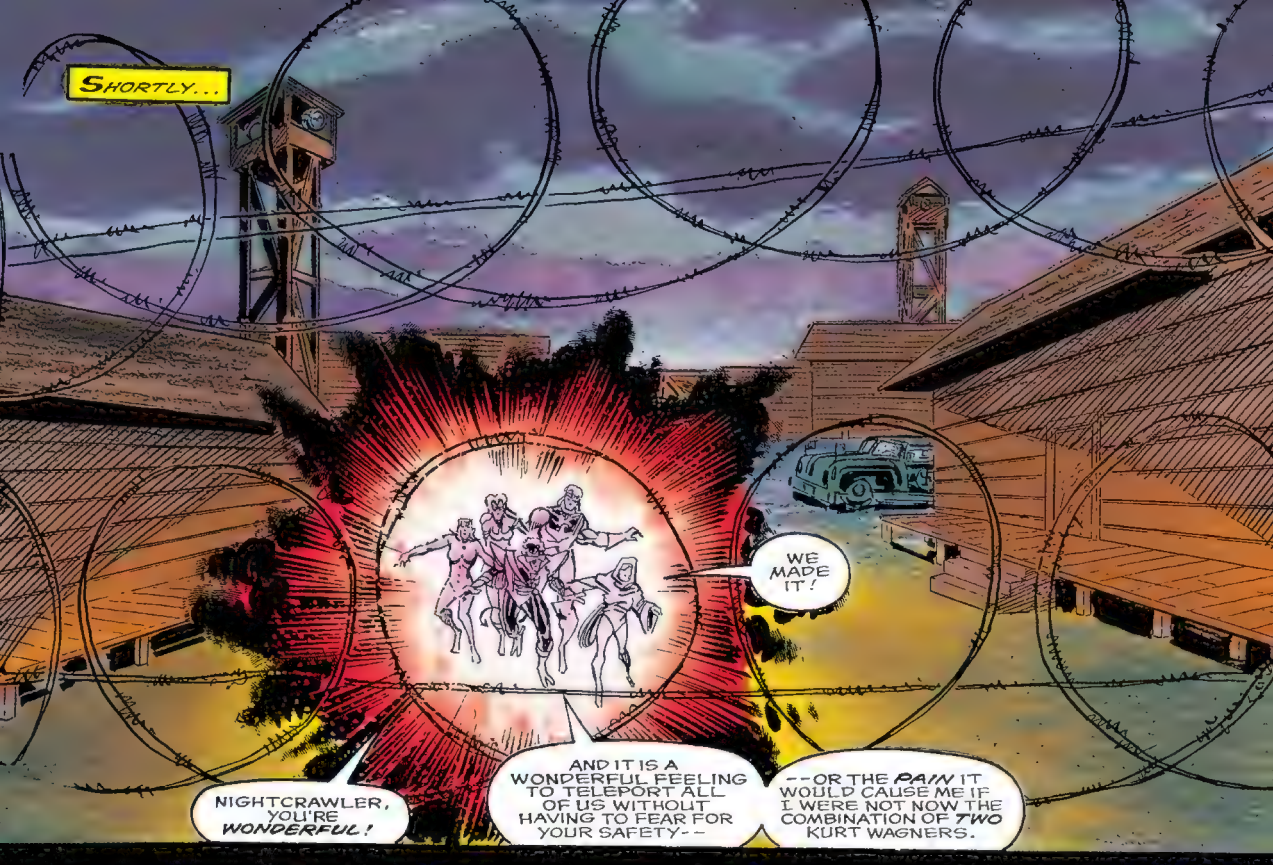
HEIL... XAVIER?
HERR XAVIER, ONCE AGAIN I MUST THANK YOU FOR SPARING MY LIFE. YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THE ERROR OF MY WAYS.
YES, OF COURSE.
NOW, IF YOU WOULD PLEASE CONTINUE WITH YOUR STUDIES OF THE GREEN-HAIRED WRETCH...
AS YOU WISH!
HEIL XAVIER! HEIL HITLER!
I HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED VIEWING MY WORK. IT CLEARLY SHOWS HOW I DEAL WITH THOSE I PERCEIVE AS ENEMIES OF THE REICH!
INDEED.
AND... WHO IS THIS HAG?
ANOTHER OF THE TRAITORS!
KILL YOU, XAVIER... KILL... KILL...
ACTUALLY, SHE WAS ONCE QUITE ATTRACTIVE.
BUT SHE SPURNED MY ADVANCES! HER FATE IS WELL-DESERVED!
...KILLLLL
OH, XAVIER, I HAVE NEGLECTED TO INFORM YOU OF THE TRUE REASON I CAME TO SEE YOU!
TRUE REASON?
INDEED. THE FUHRER WOULD HAVE A WORD WITH YOU--

--AT ONCE!
AND...
YOU HAVE KEPT ME WAITING, HERR XAVIER!
I AM NOT PLEASED!
HAVE YOU NO CONCERN FOR--
MY ONLY CONCERN IS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE REICH!

YOU ARE CONCERNED WITH NOTHING BUT YOUR OWN OBJECTIVES!
THEN YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME WELL!

YOU DARE SPEAK THIS WAY TO YOUR LEADER?!
NO...
...I DARE SPEAK THIS WAY TO YOU!!
I WARN YOU, XAVIER, THAT I AM NOT AS FAR GONE AS YOU SEEM TO BELIEVE.
KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT, OLD FRIEND.
IT MAY BE ENOUGH TO CONVINCE THE OTHERS--
--YOU MIGHT EVEN BELIEVE IT...

...BUT I KNOW THE TRUTH!
NOW YOU WILL EXCUSE ME.
I HAVE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO DEAL WITH THAN YOUR SAD DELUSIONS AND DREAMS OF WHAT ONCE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
CLEARLY, YOU HAVE LOST YOUR GRIP ON REALITY!
JOHANN...?
IT IS THE ONLY WAY.
ONCE, I, TOO, FELT THE RAVAGES OF AGE...
...BUT I USED MYSELF AS A GUINEA PIG IN AN EXPERIMENT THAT PROVED SUCCESSFUL.
I AM REVITALIZED! MY YOUTH HAS BEEN RESTORED!
YES... YES!
WE WILL INSTIGATE YOUR PLAN AT ONCE!
AND WE WILL SUCCEED--
--FOR THE GLORY OF THE FATHERLAND!
HEIL HITLER!


SHORTLY...
WE MADE IT!
NIGHTCRAWLER, YOU'RE WONDERFUL!
AND IT IS A WONDERFUL FEELING TO TELEPORT ALL OF US WITHOUT HAVING TO FEAR FOR YOUR SAFETY--
--OR THE PAIN IT WOULD CAUSE ME IF I WERE NOT NOW THE COMBINATION OF TWO KURT WAGNERS.

THE NIGHTCRAWLER WHO IS A MEMBER OF LIGHTNING SQUAD NEVER SUFFERED THE INJURY THAT THE NIGHTCRAWLER WHO IS A MEMBER OF EXCALIBUR EXPERIENCED!
IT SEEMS AS IF THE MIND OF EXCALIBUR'S NIGHTCRAWLER IS DOMINANT...
...WITHIN THE BODY OF LIGHTNING SQUAD'S NIGHTCRAWLER.
YEAH, IT'S LIKE WE'RE ALL TWO M'NYTS IN ONE!

NO!
RELAX, PHOENIX. MEGGAN WAS JUST--

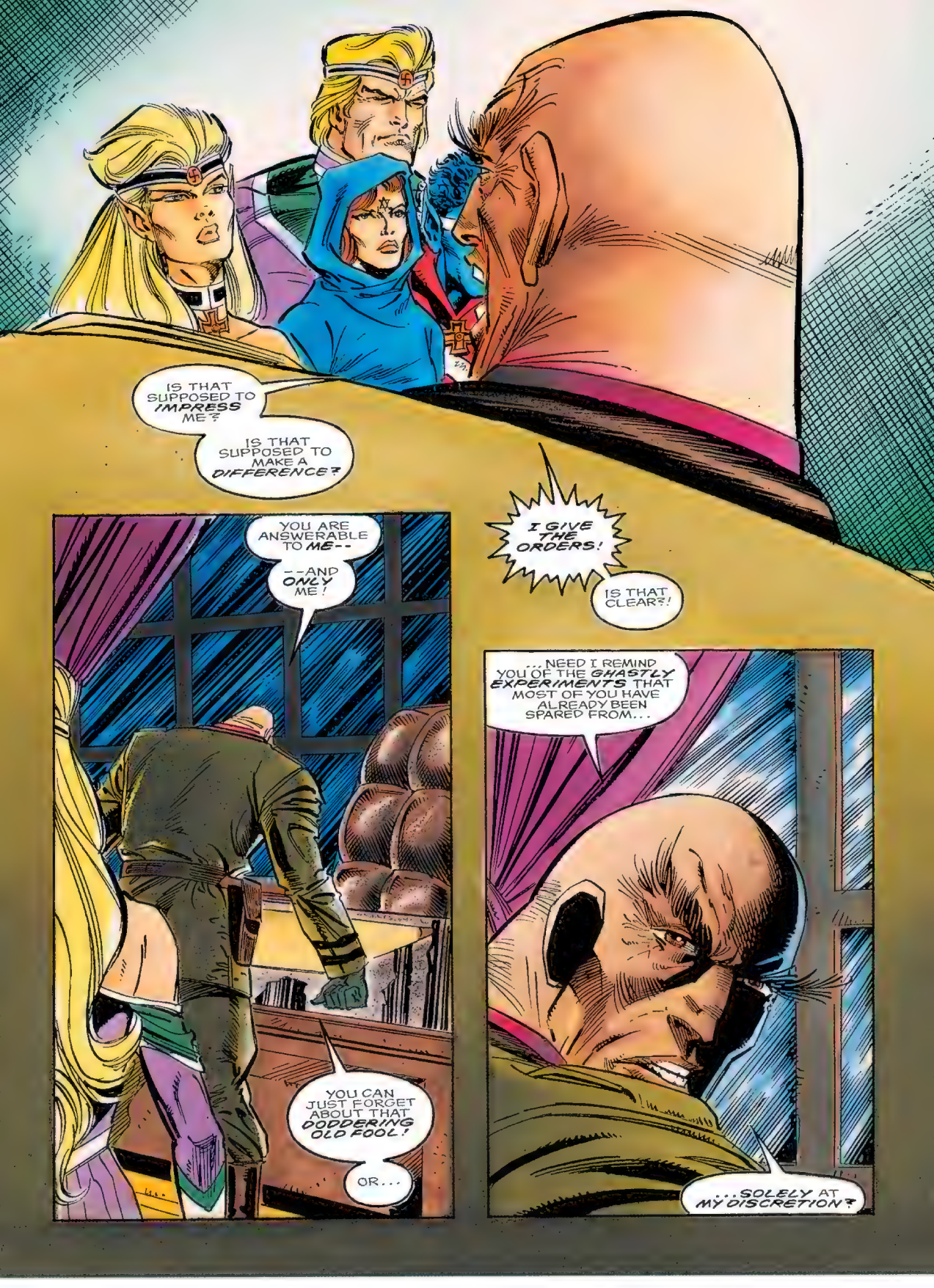
NOOOOO!
IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN! THEY'RE DYING!
IT'S SO CRUEL!
THEIR SOULS-- SCREAMING OUT!

HORRIBLE!
HORRIBLE!
SNAP OUT OF IT, GIRL!
SMAK
UH-OH! MAYBE NIGHTCRAWLER'S THEORY ISN'T EXACTLY VALID.
I SURE DIDN'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THAT!
I JUST HOPE PHOENIX--
THANK YOU, MY FRIEND!
RACHEL, ARE YOU--?
FINE!
NOW LET'S DO WHAT WE CAME HERE TO DO--

--BEFORE THAT MADMAN HAS A CHANCE TO STRIKE AGAIN!
AS ONLY HAUPTMANN BRITAIN, MEGGAN, SHADOWCAT AND NIGHTCRAWLER ARE MEMBERS OF LIGHTNING SQUAD--
--I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCOMPANY YOU, ALTHOUGH I WILL REMAIN IN CONSTANT MENTAL CONTACT!
IN THAT WAY I WILL BE ABLE TO MONITOR THE THOUGHTS OF ALL THOSE YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH--

--BETTER ENABLING YOU TO MAINTAIN YOUR DISGUISES AND DECEIVE THE NAZIS.
THEN... EXACTLY WHY ARE WE SNEAKING AROUND LIKE THIS?
IT NEVER HURT ANYONE TO BE DISCREET!

THIS IS AS FAR AS I CAN GO IF THIS DECEPTION IS GOING TO WORK--
--BUT REST ASSURED THAT I WILL BE WITH YOU!
HERR XAVIER...?
WHY DIDN'T YOU RESPOND TO MY MENTAL COMMAND?
WE WERE...
...RESPONDING TO DIRECT ORDERS OF THE FUHRER!
TELL HIM YOU WERE ON A SPECIAL MISSION--AT HITLER'S PERSONAL DIRECTIVE!.


IS THAT SUPPOSED TO IMPRESS ME?
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
I GIVE THE ORDERS!
IS THAT CLEAR?!
YOU ARE ANSWERABLE TO ME--
--AND ONLY ME!
YOU CAN JUST FORGET ABOUT THAT DODDERING OLD FOOL!
OR...
...NEED I REMIND YOU OF THE GHASTLY EXPERIMENTS THAT MOST OF YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN SPARED FROM...
...SOLELY AT MY DISCRETION?

THIS...MAN...IS CERTAINLY NOT LIKE THE PROFESSOR X THAT I KNEW!
I CAN BARELY STAND TO LOOK AT HIM! IT'S DISGUSTING!
HOW CAN THE MAN THE X-MEN KNEW AND LOVED--THE MAN WHO WAS LIKE A FATHER TO ALL OF US--POSSIBLY HAVE TURNED INTO SOMETHING SO TWISTED?!
IT'S EVEN WORSE THAN WHAT HAPPENED TO MY "COUNTERPART"!
TAKE IT EASY, EXCALIBUR!
WE SHOULDN'T REVEAL OURSELVES JUST YET!
EXCALIBUR--?
WHAT IS THIS?
YOU'RE NOT LIGHTNING SQUAD!
THAT INFORMATION ISN'T GOING TO HELP YOU MUCH, CREEP!
YOU ARE SADLY MISTAKEN!
NO! PSYCHIC BLAST!
CAN'T STOP THE FIRE IN MY BRAIN!
TOO MUCH--CAN'T SEE THROUGH THE PAIN--!
UNH!
"PITIFUL," OBSERVES XAVIER, "THAT THEY WERE SO EASILY DEFEATED!"

AND AT THAT SAME TIME...
ARE YOU READY, MEIN FUHRER!
I MUST WARN YOU THAT YOU MAY INITIALLY EXPERIENCE SOME DISCOMFORT!
WE NEED NOT DELAY A MOMENT LONGER!
I HAD THOUGHT DEATH WAS ALL THAT AWAITED ME.
NOW YOU OFFER ME A NEW LEASE ON LIFE.
CLIK
WE--
--UNGH!--
--DARE NOT--
--ARRGH!

THOUGH THEY WERE NOT EVEN WORTHY TO WEAR THE COSTUMES OF THE TRUE LIGHTNING SQUAD--
--THEY SHALL NONETHELESS, PROVIDE A GREAT DEAL OF PSYCHIC ESSENCE AIDING MY EFFORTS TO CREATE THE X-MAN!
TOO BAD.
I WOULD SURELY RELISH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISSECT THEM!
BUT, THERE WAS ANOTHER...ONE WHO "SPOKE" INTO THEIR MINDS--
--ONE WHO REPRESENTS A FAR GREATER POWER--A FAR GREATER THREAT.
ONE WHO I MUST NOW PREPARE TO--
EH?
PERHAPS I HAVE JUDGED TOO HASTILY THESE WOULD-BE HEROES!
YOU GET YOU HAVE!

HE ACTED TOO QUICKLY FOR PHOENIX TO BE ABLE TO SHIELD THE OTHERS... BUT, BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL BOND EXISTING BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, RACHEL WAS ABLE TO PROTECT ME FROM THE FULL MAGNITUDE OF HIS POWER!
AND NOW... I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING -- TRY USING MY POWERS IN A WAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER I HAVE EVER ATTEMPTED!
OOPS! MY POWERS MUST WORK IN REVERSE ON THIS WORLD SINCE MY "ALTERNATE" NEVER SUFFERED THE INJURY I DID!

NIGHTCRAWLER'S POWERS ARE FUNCTIONING AT OPTIMUM LEVELS--
--AND I HAVE TO CONCENTRATE TO BECOME INTANGIBLE!

THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME!

THINK AGAIN--
--AND TRY DOING IT WITH MY HAND SOLIDIFYING RIGHT INSIDE YOUR BRAIN!
I WONDER WHAT THIS WILL DO TO HIM...

"...AND I WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENED TO PHOENIX!"
NO! IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN!

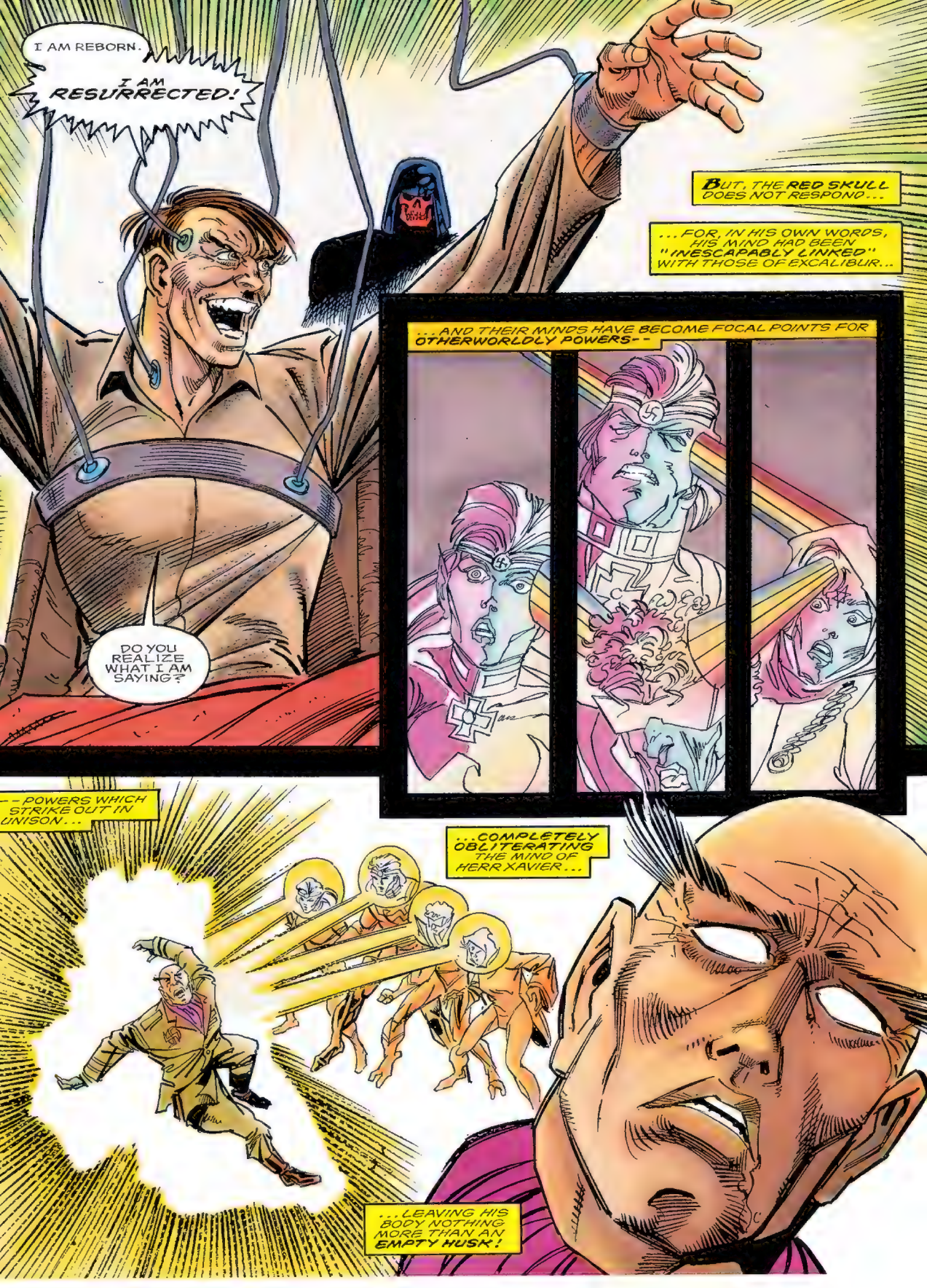
EVEN WITH XAVIER UNCONSCIOUS, THE MADMAN'S "WORK" CONTINUES, HIS SUBORDINATES BLINDLY FOLLOWING HIS INSTRUCTIONS!
IS IT WORKING, JOHANN?
ONCE MORE -- ALL THOSE LIVES BEING SACRIFICED!
INDEED, MY LEADER, YOUR LIFE'S ENERGIES ARE BEING RESTORED!
ONCE MORE I AM FORCED TO FEEL THEIR PSYCHIC SCREAMS AS THEIR LIFE FORCES ARE DRAINED FROM THEIR BODIES!
YES, JOHANN... I FEEL IT! MY VERY LIFE IS BEING RETURNED TO ME!

"NOTHING MUST STOP ME NOW!"
"NO, MY LEADER-- NOTHING!"

PERFECT!
A DIRECT HIT!
BUT I MUSTN'T DISTRESS THE LEADER WITH THE EVENTS THAT ARE OCCURRING ALL AROUND US--VERY PECULIAR EVENTS INDEED!
WE ARE AT TOO CRITICAL A JUNCTURE--
I DO NOT WISH TO ENDANGER HIS LIFE!
IF ONLY I HAD PERFECTED THIS NEW VERSION OF THE NULLATRON WHEN MAGNETO AND HIS UNDERGROUND BAND OF RENEGADE MUTANTS HAD RISEN AGAINST THE REICH!
AFTER ALL, IT IS CAPABLE OF INFLICTING MY WILL UPON ITS VICTIMS--

"--JUST AS MY MIND HAS BEEN INESCAPABLY LINKED WITH THOSE OF THE PAWNS I AM EVEN NOW UNLEASHING UPON XAVIER."
"EVEN XAVIER'S PSYCHIC ABILITIES WILL PROVE INEFFECTUAL AGAINST THEM!
"IN FACT, NO CONSCIOUS ENTITY WOULD BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE NULLATRON!
"ABSOLUTELY NONE!"
PERFECT, JOHANN, PERFECT!
I AM, ONCE AGAIN, AT MY PRIME!
I LOOK--I FEEL--JUST AS I DID WHEN I FIRST CONCEIVED MY PRECIOUS DREAM OF THE POWER AND THE GLORY OF THE THIRD REICH!

"NOTHING ON EARTH WILL BE ABLE TO STAND IN MY WAY!"
NOTHING ON EARTH, PERHAPS...
...BUT THERE ARE FORCES THAT ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD--
--FORCES THAT HAVE NOW ENTERED INTO COMMUNION!


I AM REBORN.
I AM RESURRECTED!
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT I AM SAYING?
BUT, THE RED SKULL DOES NOT RESPOND...
...FOR, IN HIS OWN WORDS, HIS MIND HAD BEEN "INESCAPABLY LINKED" WITH THOSE OF EXCALIBUR...
...AND THEIR MINDS HAVE BECOME FOCAL POINTS FOR OTHERWORLDLY POWERS--
--POWERS WHICH STRIKE OUT IN UNISON...
...COMPLETELY OBLITERATING THE MIND OF HERR XAVIER...
...LEAVING HIS BODY NOTHING MORE THAN AN EMPTY HUSK!

AND THE RED SKULL?
HE, TOO, SUFFERS THE REPERCUSSIONS OF HIS ACTIONS!
HE, TOO, THIS DAY...
...IS MADE TO PAY!

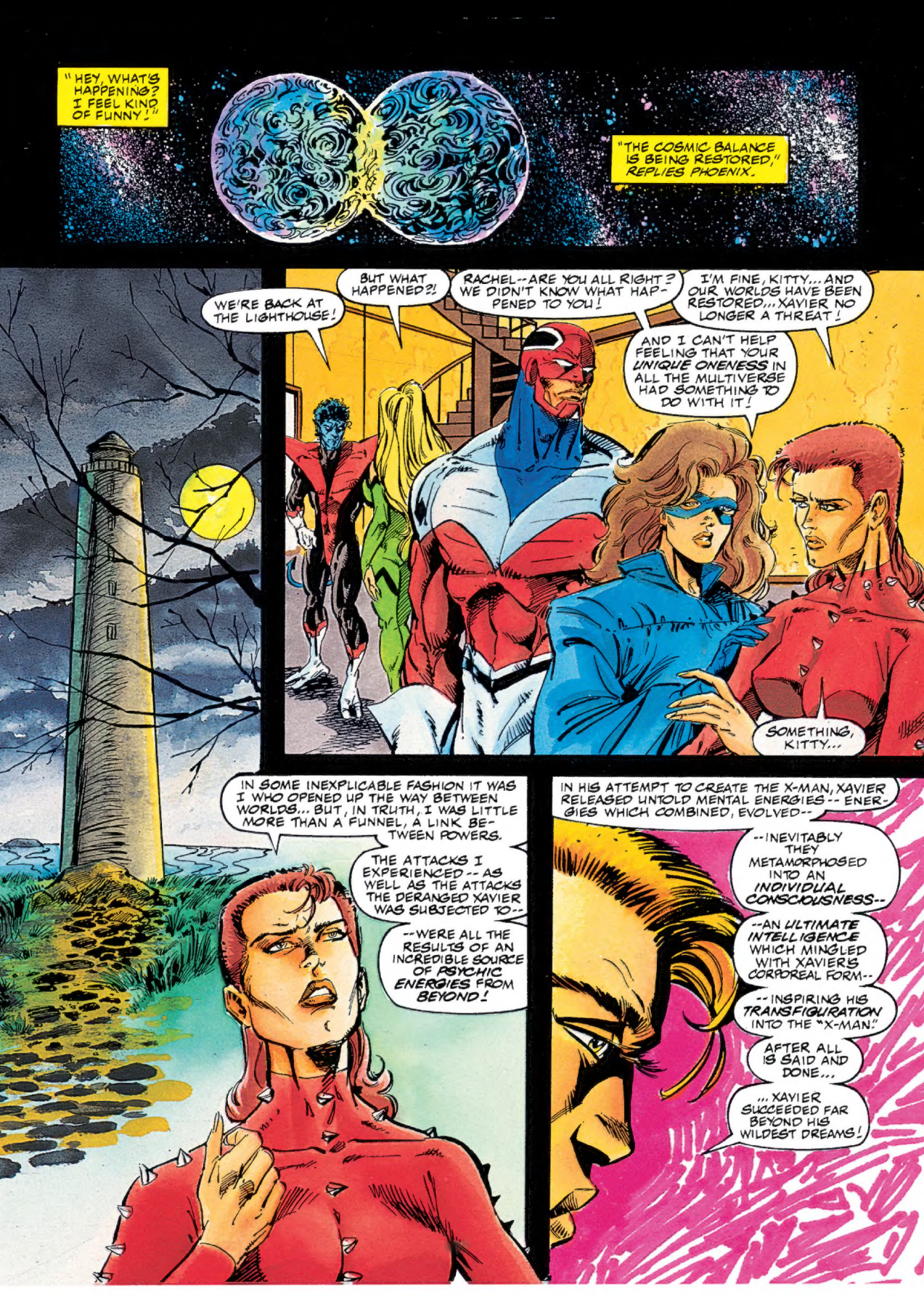
JOHANN?
HERR SKULL...?
HERR SKULL!
WE MUST STOP WHAT WE ARE DOING AT ONCE!

FROM THE VOID...
...COMES LIFE--
--REBIRTH.
AT LAST THE COMMUNION IS COMPLETE.
WHILE, ANOTHER...
GOO-GOO.
GA-GA.
...IS RETURNED TO THE VOID.

MAN...
...AND SUPER-MAN.

OH, MY GOD!
EXACTLY WHAT I WAS THINKING.
I CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK ANY LONGER--

"--SURELY HE IS WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE!"


"HEY, WHAT'S HAPPENING? I FEEL KIND OF FUNNY!"
"THE COSMIC BALANCE IS BEING RESTORED," REPLIES PHOENIX.
WE'RE BACK AT THE LIGHTHOUSE!
BUT WHAT HAPPENED?!
RACHEL--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU!
I'M FINE, KITTY... AND OUR WORLDS HAVE BEEN RESTORED... XAVIER NO LONGER A THREAT!
AND I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT YOUR UNIQUE ONENESS IN ALL THE MULTIVERSE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT!
SOMETHING, KITTY...
IN SOME INEXPLICABLE FASHION IT WAS I WHO OPENED UP THE WAY BETWEEN WORLDS... BUT, IN TRUTH, I WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A FUNNEL, A LINK BETWEEN POWERS.
THE ATTACKS I EXPERIENCED -- AS WELL AS THE ATTACKS THE DERANGED XAVIER WAS SUBJECTED TO--
--WERE ALL THE RESULTS OF AN INCREDIBLE SOURCE OF PSYCHIC ENERGIES FROM BEYOND!
IN HIS ATTEMPT TO CREATE THE X-MAN, XAVIER RELEASED UNTOLD MENTAL ENERGIES -- ENERGIES WHICH COMBINED, EVOLVED--
--INEVITABLY THEY METAMORPHOSED INTO AN INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS--
--AN ULTIMATE INTELLIGENCE WHICH MINGLED WITH XAVIER'S CORPOREAL FORM--
--INSPIRING HIS TRANSFIGURATION INTO THE "X-MAN."
AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE...
...XAVIER SUCCEEDED FAR BEYOND HIS WILDEST DREAMS!

NOK NOK NOK
WHERE WERE YOU?
MEIN GOTT!
UH-OH!
ISN'T THIS WHERE WE CAME IN?
I'M AFRAID SO!
IT LOOKS LIKE OUR TROUBLE IS ONLY BEGINNING!
HEY, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU GUYS?
I WAS JUST WONDERING WHERE KITTY WAS WHEN I CAME BY EARLIER TO WORK ON OUR PROJECT.
PROJECT? I-I COMPLETELY FORGOT!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
WHAT'S SO FUNNY? SOMETHING I SAID?
DON'T STRAIN YOUR BRAIN, ALISTAIRE.
WHAT HAPPENED IS MORE THAN MOST WOULD BE ABLE TO FULLY COMPREHEND...

"...BUT I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT A WORLD VERY MUCH IN NEED HAS AT LONG LAST FOUND A *SAVIOR!*"

THE END...?

And The Legend Lives On . . .